DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 252 766 CG 017 935

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TITLE Why Is It Taking So Long for Behavior Modification To Be Used in the Schools, or, Am I Being Too Impatient?
PUB DATE Apr 84
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of School Psychologists (16th, Philadlephia, PA, April 18-21, 1984).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavioral Science Research; *Behavior Modification; *Educational Practices; Educational Research; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

In education, as in the area of mental illness, the first application of behavior modification began with the treatment of the severely retarded and the autistic. By 1970 behavioral principles were being applied to normal children in the home and regular classes in schools. While behavior modification has been accepted to some degree in special education classes, teachers in the regular classroom do not understand behavioral principles. The current status of knowledge and use of behavior modification in education as indicated through journal articles and teacher training shows that the amount of behavior modification research being published varies widely from one journal to another, and that schools training elementary teachers are not requiring coursework in behavior modification. Education has been slow in adapting to behavior modification because thinking of people's behavior is contrary to the orientation of the American culture, where the psychodynamic view is widespread. Behavior modification is perceived to have been with us for only a decade, and there is little reason to see it as different from the various fads in education that have occurred in the past. Nonetheless, there are positive signs about its future. There is an overall growth in understanding of the behavioral approach as evidenced by: (1) continued research in this area by school psychologists; (2) behavior modification course requirements in special education; (3) at least limited exposure to behavioral principles for student teachers; (4) and the current focus on excellence in education, which shares a behavioral emphasis on empericism. (LLL)

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WHY IS IT TAKING SO LONG FOR BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION TO BE USED IN THE SCHOOLS/ OR AM I BEING TOO IMPATIENT?

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CG 017935

Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the National Association of School Psychologists, Philadelphia, PA, April 18-21, 1984.

WHY IS IT TAKING SO LONG FOR BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION TO BE USED IN THE SCHOOLS/ OR AM I BEING TOO IMPATIENT?

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Being here in Philadelphia reminds me that in the early '60s I attended a conference in Beaver College on cigarette smoking research. Those attending were the psychologists, who at that time, were conducting research on smoking; there were only about 30 or 40 of us. At the time of conference Congress had just passed the bill requiring cigarette companies to print on each package of cigarettes the statement "cigarette smoking may be injurious to your health". The group was quite pleased. I felt that with the passing of that bill and mounting evidence linking smoking and health problems, that cigarette smoking in our country would soon be ended and, consequently, I switched my research energies to other areas. Perhaps I have made the same erroneous assumption regarding the use of behavior modification in the schools.

We are all aware of the development and growth of behavior modification. After Watson changed the definition of psychology from the study of consciousness to the study of behavior it then became possible to study animal behavior. Throughout the 20', 30's and 40's many psychologists were interested in learning theories and used animals as subjects. Much of the ground work for behavior modification was laid at this time as behavioral principles began to surface from a wide variety of research studies. In the 30's and 40's there were a few studies in which children served as subjects but the focus of the research was still on proving or disproving learning theories. In the early 50's these principles, that had held up in research for several decades, were applied to help people. The behavior of profoundly regressed mental patients were changed using behavioral principles. In education, as in the area of mental illness, the first application of behavior modification began with the treatment of the more deviant children, the severely retarded and autistic. Toward the end of the 50's psychologists, who were also parents, used behavioral principles to change the behavior of their own children. In the middle 60's psychologists began to teach behavioral principles to parents of normal children. In education, the procedures designed for the extremely disturbed now moved into special educational class to be applied to the less disturbed children. By 1970 behavioral principles were now being applied to normal children in the home and regular classes in the schools. In 1972 the National Society for the Study of Education, which has as one of its functions to publish a yearbook on important areas of education, chose behavior modification as a topic for their yearbook (1973). In the preface of that yearbook the editors state, "The Board of Directors in late 1969, after a survey of the publications of the Society, noted that although yearbooks had been published in the areas of learning, teaching, counseling , mental health, and classroom management, these publications, with a few exceptions, predated the upheaval in education generally referred to as the behavior modification movement. It was also noted that

behavior modification, dealing specifically with methods of behavior change based on paradigms of operant conditioning, social modeling, and counterconditioning, was profoundly infuencing many areas of education."

As the above quote was made in 1972 one would think that this "profound influence" would have continued and that the application of behavior modification would by now be widely used in the schools and be an area of knowledge about which all educators would be thoroughly familiar. But has this taken place? Has behavior modification been accepted in the schools? Have these new techniques been applied to help the children and teachers? Are teachers knowledgeable and competent in the application of this approach? Are school psychologists using this approach in their consultation with teachers? Are the journals dedicated to educational research promulgating behavior modification? The answers to these questions are difficult to find but it does appear that what was preceived in the late 60's as a giant step forward in education has been only minimally accepted in the schools. While behavior modification has been accepted to some degree in special education classes, teachers in the regular classroom generally do not understand behavior principles, do not know how to apply them and, frequently, have a negative attitude toward such an approach. Some school psychologists are knowledgeable about behavior principles and, when consulting with teachers, are able to help teachers change the behavior of pupils using behavioral principles. But such school psychologists are rare. The journals that purport to publish educational research publish little in the area of behavior modification. In some of these journals not only is there a minimal number of articles using the behavioral approach but, in one journal, the editor is not only uninformed about behavior modification but is negative in his attitude as well.

This paper will focus on three areas: Data on the use and knowledge of behavior modfication in education, some speculation as to why behavior modification has been so slow in being accepted in education, and, lastly, a look at some positive signs regarding the acceptance and use of behavior modification in education.

IS THERE SOME DATA THAT MIGHT INDICATE THE CURRENT STATUS OF KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION IN EDUCATION?

There are two areas that might be relevant. One is a review of the journals dedicated to educational research to determine the amount of behavior modification research being published. Another area is concerned with the amount of training that students being trained as teachers receive in behavior modification. The third area consists of some of my personal experience in trying to teach teachers and school psychologists behavior modification.

1. Journal articles. I shall not discuss Greer's paper (1982) as I am sure that he will include reference to it in his presentation; I would like to say that I perceive his paper, and the critique by Brophy, as an absolute must for school psychologists and, for that matter, anyone in education.

In order to determine the number of studies using behavior modification let me present some research data that has been partially analysed. Walberg, Vukosavich and Tsai (1981) reviewed the journals that published articles in the field of education. These articles were factor analysed for their content. Some of thejournals that had the highest factor loading for "educational core" were reviewed for the years 1975 and 1978. The percentage of research articles using behavior modification as compared to the total research studies for these journals were as follows: Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis (1975) 100%, Journal of Educational Research (1975) 30%, Journal of Experimental Education (1975) 2%, Reading Quarterly (1975) 14%, Journal of Educational Psychology (1978) 14%, Journal of Experimental Education (1978) 14%, Journal of Experimental Education (1978) 2% and Psychology in the Schools (1978) 11%. We are in the process of collecting and analysing more data on different journals and for other years. It is obvious from this limited data that the percentage of behavior modification research varies widely from one journal to another. In the only journal (Journal of Experimental Education) from which data is available for both years there is no change in the percentage of behavior modification research.

2. The training of teacher in behavior modification. As a trainer in school psychology I have attempted to train our students to be extremely competent in the area of behavioral consultation. When our students go into a school their first task is not to help the teacher apply behavior principles but, instead, they have to begin with the gradual wooing of the teacher, building rapport, changing the attitude of the teacher about behavior modification and then, and only then, can they proceed with the application of behavior principles. I see much time wasted. How much more effective this process would be if the teacher knew and understood the behavioral approach so that my student could begin working with the teachers to help the children. If teachers knew behavior modification before they completed their training much time would be saved. Do the training institutions teach behavior modification? Barbara Ferrenz, one of our students, investigated this question. She sent a questionnaire to the 108 schools training elementary teachers who were listed as member institutions of the Association of Colleges and School of Education in State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. There were 78 questionnaires returned that were usable. While 32% of the schools said that they had a course in Behavior Modification available only 2 1/2% of the schools stated that the course was required. There were 67% of the schools which said that behaior modification was a topic imbedded in another course that was available to elementary teachers but only 44% of the schools required the course. In the course in which other topics were covered 2/3s of the respondents said that 20% or less of the course dealt with behavior modification and 1/3 of the schools said that 10% or less of the course dealt with behavior modification.

WHY HAS EDUCATION BEEN SO SLOW IN ADAPTING BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION?

1. Thinking of people in terms of behavior is so contrary to orientation of our culture. Citizens of our country have really

been taught only one way of viewing others. That view of course is a psychodymanic one which is an extention of Freud's views. The key questions of "Why do people behave the way that they do?" and "How can we change the way they behave?" are all answered in approximately the same way by most people today. The teaching of the psychodymanic view is so wide spread, from Ann Landers to Broadway plays, from the comic strips to the movies, from TV soapers to how to raise children books. Looking for explanation of behavior in terms of antecedent conditons and consequences is foriegn enough to be extra-terestial. I have had students after taking my course in behavior modification tell me about a problem their little brother is having and ask what is the "real" problem,i. e. the psychodymanic problem.

2. Historically changes in education have tended to be transitory and have not had any lasting effect . As few educators are aware of the long history of behavior modification many believe that behavior modification came into being around 1970. Behavior modification is perceived to have been with us for only a decade there is little reason to see it as different from the various fads in education that have taken place in the past such as team teaching and open class rooms. This viewing of behavior modification as a fad was brought home to me a few years ago. I asked a school psychologist if her school system was using behavior modification. She replied, "No, we used behavior modirication last year. This year we are using Reality Therapy."

3. Opposition from within the field of education and psychology. There is considerable evidence that there is opposition to behavior modification from leaders in education and psychology. One example would be the gross misunderstanding of behavior modification by Brophy in the Educational Researcher in his critique of Greer's paper. Another sutble example recently took place in Congress. In the revision of the Public Law 94 - 142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, the House, in H. R. 3435 proposed substituting the label "Behaviorally Disordered" for "Seriously Emotionally Disturbed" for children handicapped by their behavior. I saw such a charge as a positive one. Not only is the label "Behaviorally Disordered" less stigmatizing for children so labeled but it points toward treatment which focuses on changing the behavior. However, much opposition arose against this proposed change. Several arguments were advanced by those who opposed the change but the one that stood out for me was that the label "Behaviorally Disordered" does not take into account the dynamics of personality or the etiology of the problem. The Senate and the House have asked the Office of Special Education Programs to conduct a study on the effect of changing the labels. That study is currently underway. The third example I would like to cite is a relatively recent one. In December, AABT held its annual meeting, World Congress on Behavior Therapy, in Washington. One would think the mission of AABT (Association for the Advancement of Behavior Therapy) would be to promote the knowledge and use of behavioral princi[illegible] It seems to me that one would also think that there would be considerable emphasis on behavior modification in the schools at this meeting. In the schools are teachers who, if they understood and practiced behavior modification, would surely teach

this knowledge, one way or another, to their students and, over time, many of our citizens would know and understand behavior modification. There is an other reason why one would expect that behavior modification in the schools would not be slighted; the president of AABT is Dan O'Leary, an outstanding leader and researcher in appling behavior modification in the schools. And yet how much emphasis was given to this area? Answer: not much. A review of the AABT program shows that there were more papers on eating disorders than on behavior modification in the schools.

ARE THERE ANY POSITIVE SIGNS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION IN THE SCHOOLS?

Yes, there are several:

1. The overall growth of the behavioral approach in understanding and changing people's behavior. This growth is reflected in many ways. One is continued emphasis and research by school psychologists on behavior modification in the schools. A very recent example is an article by Allen and Forman (1984) in the recent issue of School Psychology Review titled Efficacy of training teachers in behavior modification. Another would be the increase in the number of journals publishing behavioral research. Barlow (Behavior Therapy, 15, 1-2, 1984) notes that in 1970 there were three journals publishing primarily behavioral material while in 1984 there are over 30 such journals. Much of the focus of these journals is on the clinical application of behavior therapy but, I believe that growth in this area will help people learn a behavioral orientation and this in turn will have a positive effect on the application of behavior modification in the schools.

2. The training of students in special education. From talking to my friends in special education it apears that in many programs a course in behavior modification is required for a degree in special education. This is certainly understandable from the history of behavior modification and for several handicapping conditions behavior modification is the treatment of choice.

3. The training of elementary school teachers. While the data cited above indicates that behavior modification is not an area which is emphasized in the teacher training curiculum, student teachers are at least getting some exposure to behavioral principles. This is an improvement over the past.

4. Change in behavior of those attending my workshops. Over the last 25 years I have given many presentations and workshops on behavior modification from PTA meetings, to teacher workshops, to talks to nursery school teachers to presentations to school psychologists. It was not pleasant discussing behavior modification in those early days; I don't believe any one ever threw anything at me but I did experience considerable verbal abuse and hostility. When I make presentations today I frequently brace myself for an attack but they are just not forthcoming. While I do encounter some indifference, for the most part I receive a relatively positive response. There is no doubt there has been an improvement in my presentations (there certainly should be some

improvement) but I believe more people have been exposed to behavior modification and are more receptive.

5. Current focus on excellence in education. Along with this focus on excellence in education is included an empirical orientation and there is no orientation as concerned with empiricism as the behavioral approach. A recent book, "Structuring your Classroom for Academic Success", by Paine, Radicchi, Roselline, Deutchman and Darch (1983) reviews educational research that points up teacher behaviors that improve learning of children. Needless to say, much of the research cited comes from behavioral principles and studies.

In summary I have presented some data on the use of behavior modification in the schools, looked at some points that have retarded the use of behavior modification in schools and lastly have looked at some positive areas in promoting behavioral knowledge. I again raise the question: Am I being impatient?

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